

The simplest answer

By [Daniel Harrell](#)

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As we know, “let there be light” were the first words out of the Lord’s mouth in the beginning. However, few people have taken this literally since, like the Lord, the universe is thought to be infinite with no definite beginning.

But then along came Albert Einstein and Edwin Hubble, who theorized and confirmed how galaxies were receding away from each other over time. The universe was actually expanding. What this meant was that if you were to run the clock backwards far enough, you’d get to a point in time when all matter, energy and space itself condensed into a single spot.

Then there’s the recent discovery of cosmic background radiation that fills what were thought to be the dark voids of space. This microwave light is residue from that single beginning—an echo of the Lord’s first words—and has become enough to convince even the staunchest critics of a decisive start for the universe 13.7 billion years ago.

So the Bible had it right after all (once you’re willing to concede on the seven 24-hour days). Some scientists weren’t nearly as thrilled. Agnostic cosmologist Robert Jastrow expressed his own sense of dismay when he wrote this:

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

We've labeled this scientifically confirmed beginning the "Big Bang," popularly conceived as some massive, fiery, bright blast out of nothingness from which hurled galaxies, stars, planets, air, water, land, you and me. But as far as we can tell, the Big Bang wasn't big at all. It was more of an infinitesimal, itty bitty, soundless snap.

It's currently impossible for science to get back to point zero and describe what happened. Einstein's theory of general relativity, related to gravity, is very precise as to what was going on one second *after* the Itty Bitty Bang—when already the universe had expanded to about 1,000 times the size of our solar system. But whatever happened occurred before that, in the subatomic world of quantum mechanics—where general relativity and gravity don't apply.

And this is a huge problem. The math of general relativity and the math of quantum mechanics do not add up. It's as if reality is really divided in two. It doesn't make any sense.

Neither physicists nor philosophers can fully comprehend what happened in the beginning. They posit fantastic notions, such as time folding over on itself into something of rewinding tape, a vacuum from which popped out a little packet of energy that quickly bloomed into a universe, and the existence of an exponentially large number of universes out there of which ours is but one pulled out of the deck.

These same physicists and philosophers tend to agree that whichever theory proves simplest is probably the true answer. Here's where the theologians eagerly join the chorus. What more simple explanation exists than to say, "God did it!"? Oxford philosopher of science Richard Swinburne asserts that, "to posit a trillion, trillion other universes to explain our universe seems slightly mad when the much simpler hypothesis of God is available."

The same might be said of a baby born in a manger who is Christ the Lord. Of all the ways God could have chosen to love and show himself to humans, showing up as a human being who loved them enough to die for them is simply beautiful.